

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 SCCT-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03

OPR-02 PM-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 /074 W

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R 180912Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6971

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 11240

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EIND, PINR, PINS, RP

SUBJECT: WEYERHAEUSER SHUTS DOWN

REF: A) MANILA 10674; B) STATE 193921; C) MANILA 10582;
D) MANILA 10153

1. WEYERHAEUSER REQUEST FOR PROTECTION FOLLOWING
AMBUSH AT ITS MILBUK, COTABATO LOGGING CONCESSIONS
WAS ANSWERED BY PROVISION OF 300 ARMY AND PC TROOPS,
DRAWN PRIMARILY FROM LEBAK, COTABATO. ARMY SET UP
ADVANCE POST IN MILBUK, AND MAJOR IN CHARGE OF LEBAK
DETACHMENT HAS TRANSFERRED THERE. DESPITE THIS AND USE
OF C-47'S FOR STRAFING, AFTER TWO WEEKS OF FIGHTING
REBELS REMAIN ENTRENCHED.

2. CASUALTIES CONTINUE TO MOUNT. WEYERHAEUSER
OFFICIAL ESTIMATES CIVILIAN DEATHS NOW TOTAL ABOUT 40,
INCLUDING 3 MEMBERS CITIZEN'S SELF-DEFENSE UNIT,
SEVERAL CIVILIANS HIT BY STRAY BULLETS AROUND CAMP,
AND 13 PASSENGERS IN JEEPNEY AMBUSHED ON SAME DAY AS
WEYERHAEUSER AMBUSH.

3. MILITARY DEATHS ARE ESTIMATED AT ABOUT TEN. ALTHOUGH
MILITARY HAS NOT PROVEN PARTICULARLY AGGRESSIVE, WHEN-
EVER IT SEEKS TO MOUNT AN ATTACK, REBEL SNIPERS IN TREES
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PICK OFF A FEW MEN. WEYERHAEUSER OFFICIAL STATES THAT

MILITARY HAS HAD SOME DIFFICULTY WITH ITS OWN MEN AND THAT ONE OR TWO HAVE BEEN SACKED FOR DERELICTION OF DUTY.

4. ALTHOUGH INTENSITY OF FIRING HAS DROPPED OFF IN LAST FEW DAYS, WEYERHAEUSER SEES NO PROSPECTS FOR ANY IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT. ON SEPTEMBER 15 IT FURLOUGHED ITS WORKERS, AND IT HAS FILED WITH GOVERNMENT FOR THREE MONTH TEMPORARY SHUT-DOWN. SOME OF WORKERS HAVE ALREADY LEFT, AND OTHERS WISH TO. ARMY, WHICH LAST WEEK APPROVED EVACUATIONS, THIS WEEK SAYS NO. WEYERHAEUSER IS PROVIDING MINIMUM RATIONS UNTIL MATTERS CAN BE SORTED OUT.

5. WEYERHAEUSER'S PRIMARY CONCERN AT MOMENT IS THAT REBELS MIGHT MOUNT ATTACK ON LEBAK WHILE MILITARY TIED DOWN AT MILBUK. IF THIS SHOULD HAPPEN, WEYERHAEUSER EXPECTS MILITARY WOULD PULL BACK TO LEBAK, RESULTING IN MASS EVACUATION FROM MILBUK BY ANY MEANS AVAILABLE. BARRING THAT, MOST LIKELY PROSPECT IS CONTINUING STALEMATE AT MILBUK.
PURNELL

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